

Your MSU Master Gardener
Environment & Conservation Committee present



The MSU Extension “Master Naturalist Program-2004”

Program

Participants in the “Master Naturalist” Program will gain a greater understanding of the natural environment and conservation techniques while learning the flora and fauna native to West Michigan. Through the six week program and subsequent volunteer opportunities, gardeners can take an active role in implementing what they have learned throughout their neighborhoods and in their own backyards.

About the Instructors

All classes and labs will be led by trained educators or conservation professionals who are recognized experts and frequently sought after as conference presenters.

Locations

Six sessions will be held in a wide variety of locations including well known (or somewhat secretive) parks, wetlands and bogs. Classes may include more than one site visit per class. Automobile transportation is necessary to the initial location. Carpooling can be coordinated if necessary.

What to Expect

Students will be provided with a training notebook, materials and resources appropriate for study. Students should wear appropriate clothing such as boots, hat, sunscreen, long pants, etc. A camera, hand lens, field guides and binoculars may also prove helpful on lab walks. All classes will go on rain or shine.

Volunteering

When the program is completed, 25 Advanced Educational Credits will be added to your record. To receive certification as “Master Naturalist”, participants must complete 30 volunteer hours comprised of efforts related to the program (such as the garlic mustard pull). Volunteer hours can be accumulated during the course or until April 2006. Graduates will be recognized at the Annual MSU Extension Master Gardener Banquet.

Topics/Dates

April 17—Conservation Theory & Practice
May 15—Woodland
June 12—Trees & Shrubs
June 26—Wetlands
July 31—Invasives
August 7—Prairie Environments

Cost

\$150.00 registration fee includes all six sessions, materials and handouts. Couples wishing to share materials may deduct \$35.00 from their registration fee.



Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone _____ E-mail: _____

Mail this registration and your check payable to Kent/MSUE by March 19, 2004 to:
Kent MSU Master Naturalist Program, 775 Ball Avenue, NE, Grand Rapids, 49503



Kent County Master Gardeners

“Green Pages”

March, 2004

Happy March,

Is the snow gone yet? As I write this, on the 18th of February, we’re still blanketed with 10” of the white stuff. It makes me wonder, what is going on underneath that blanket. I imagine swarms of insects, voles, and strange alien life forms multiplying and eating all of my carefully cultivated plants!!! ...and, then I wake up and realize it might be true. However, I must remember, as I freeze, that those other life forms are also freezing and then I feel better. Pardon the funny stuff, but I thought we deserved a bit of levity in the middle of this cloudy winter.

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Apparently there is still some confusion regarding re-certification. For clarification - If you are a Basic or Advanced MSU Master Gardener, you have until March 31st to re-certify. If you re-certified by December 31st, 2003, you have a whole year now to re-certify for 2004. If you wait until March 31st to re-certify, you have 9 months to re-certify for 2004. [The new certification year is now January 1—December 31. As of now, 15 volunteer hours and 5 educational credits are needed to re-certify.]

Our first 2004 class—Winter Class—is another enthusiastic and knowledgeable group. I’m amazed at how much expertise there is among our group. We keep drawing very astute gardeners and many who voraciously learn everything they can. Please welcome our new group as they begin joining us at events and at the hotline this spring.

You will note that I repeated our volunteer opportunities in this newsletter and probably will again in April and May. There are also a few new ones. Please let me know when you respond to these notices. I would like to inform the many folks who call for volunteers that we do respond and are available. I am excited about the new project at Gilda’s House and the possibility of MSU MGs becoming involved in several of our Kent County Parks, including Millennium Park, to say nothing of the beginning of our new “Ideas Garden” at the Extension.

I’m still enjoying my job and love to meet all of you. Please forgive me if I suddenly forget your name. There are now about 550 people to keep track of. And then... I’ll soon be joining some of you as an official “senior.”

Gordon Griffin
Kent MSU Master Gardener Coordinator

Hotline News

Sharon Globig—Kent/MSU Extension Lawn & Garden Hotline Coordinator



This year we will have 4 new diagnosticians to help with the Hotline. The new folks are Harriett Bromberg, Jay Cravens, PamLevy, and Don Kelley. They will join with our “regulars” CJ Brander, Sarabeth Carr, Nancy Hoovler, Barbara Jenness, and Joe Nelson by each taking a half day a week. So..., there’s no excuse such as “I’m not good on the phone”, or “I don’t know all of the answers.” The Hotline will resume in early April, and we encourage you to sign up in the Spring as that is our busiest time. Hopefully you all got to the Home & Garden Show to see our booth which included a question and answer hotline area. MANY questions were asked and answered and it served as a great tool to get information out to the public.

There is still room in the Advanced Plant Health Diagnostic Clinic being held here at the Extension beginning on Tuesday, March 9. If you need more information please call 336-7734, or Gordon at 336-3283.

Hotline Question: What is the first wildflower to bloom?

Answer from our own Cheryl Tolley: To the best of my knowledge, the Skunk Cabbage (*Symplocarpus foetidus*). As soon as you can hear water trickling in the brooks, sometimes as early as February, you will find the flower of Skunk Cabbage. The buds formed in the fall, and the tough, pointed spathes pierce the frozen ground, melting their way with their own heat. The first insects of spring are attracted by the odor. Another early plant is the Harbinger-of-Spring (*Erigenia bulbosa*). It braves the chill of early March, this is a small plant not noticed by many. Other plants blooming about the same time as Harbinger would be Spicebush, Hepatica and Coltsfoot.



Dig these MG upcoming calendar events!

MG’s Big Cheese Coming to GR!!

Don’t miss the opportunity to meet and greet MSU MG State Coordinator Mary McLellan, who will be coming to our very own digs on Thurs., March 25th at 7:00 p.m. She will show us her slides of a recent visit to Europe. Master Gardeners current and past are invited to roll out the red carpet for her while we lift our glasses and toast another upcoming gardening season! The “No Whine and Cheese Extrava-

ganza” is shaping up to be another fun time to spend together. We will have the chance to brag about all the wonderful things happening in Kent County. Please RSVP, space is limited to 70 “happy” people.

Keep watching for upcoming details on the MG Banquet as much fun and excitement is being planted! Details to follow in future newsletters, so Happy Trowels, for now, and keep that calendar open for Thursday, May 20th.

Kent/MSU Extension/MG Partnership

Our staff at MSU Extension has become aware of specific needs at Dickinson Elementary Public School. Dickinson is located in SE Grand Rapids in the Garfield Park Neighborhood just north of Burton and east of Madison. It is a high achieving school that focuses on the performing arts. Due to budget cuts and the fact that many students come from low-income families, the school has many needs. We plan to coordinate a book and board game (gently used is ok) drive this spring and a school supply drive this summer. More on that later.

For now, we thought some of our MSU Master Gardeners might want to help. Here are some current ways you can help Dickinson students. We will have a donation canister at the Extension office.

General Mills Box Tops for Education (on cereal boxes & other products)
Campbell’s Labels
Donate to Dickinson through Meijers and Spartan Store’s Rewards Programs (tell the clerk you want to credit Dickinson School)

...thanks

Opportunities for 2004—If you respond to one of these opportunities, please inform Gordon. Many of these folks are waiting for you.



We thought it important to list the current opportunities to get you thinking ahead about trying something different this summer. Many of you continue to provide volunteer service on a regular basis at the same place. That is, of course, commendable; however, we continue to have requests from new groups who would appreciate some of our wonderful expertise and excitement about gardening.

Our “Old Friends”

Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park—Of course we continue to encourage our MSU Master Gardeners to provide all of the services offered by the “Gardens.” (Butterflies, Plant Sale, Spring Cleanup, Spring Planting, Summer Weeding, Fall Planting, Indoor or Outdoor Hort., and Docents) This year, however, there will be a need for additional persons to work in the Children’s Garden which opens in late June. [For more information call Marlene Seida at the Gardens—975-3152]

Ronald McDonald House—Mary Crawford continues to work with a group of folks who maintain these gardens. [Call Mary at 940-0998]

Voigt House—Another dedicated MG, Marie Ambs heads up this project to keep the historic gardens in perfect shape. [Call Marie after May 1 at 453-3098 or call Gordon now—336-3283]

Cannon Township Center—This is a continued beautification project at 6878 Belding Road, Historical Museum & Fire Dept. [Call Pat Herrington at 874-6975]

Rain Gardens—I now have an extensive list of opportunities for those interested in this worthwhile project. There are 11 projects in the works.

Humane Society of Kent County—Two of our 2003 class graduates began this program last year and have done an amazing job. They will need much help this Spring & Summer as additional plantings are planned. The location is 3077 Wilson Drive NW, so if you live on the West Side, this should be convenient for you. Call Christine Doele-Musser at 616-534-6482.

New Opportunities

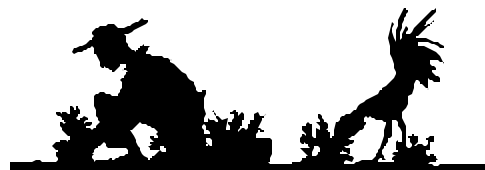
Covenant Village of the Great Lakes—Located at 2510 Lake Michigan Dr. N.W., this is a brand new Independent Living agency. They are looking for help regarding which plants, flowers to grow and other advice. They are requesting 2 people to commit 2 hours per week for 8 weeks. Please call Linda Kirpes at 735-4541 Ext. 409.

Health Intervention Services—This is a small non-profit faith based health clinic for people without health insurance. They have a South facing yard and berm that need renewed plantings and upkeep. They will be in need of “donated” plants as well. Their desire is to be an attractive presence in the neighborhood that reflects the professionalism of the clinic, but also warmth and caring. They would like an on-going presence of our MGs at 15 Andre S.E. Please call Sylvia Daining at 475-1363.



VanAndel Museum—Has anyone contacted Sam Wilthuis at the Museum to offer help in planning their gardens? This is a great opportunity to “show our stuff” to the general public. Please call Sam at 456-0762. Sam wants to start planning now!

Gilda’s Club Vegetable Garden—A large vegetable garden is planned at Gilda’s Club, 1806 Bridge Street NW. The garden will be used by client’s, their families and friends. This is a partnership with Grand Rapids Community College, so there are plans to involve students from the College in the project as well. Produce will be used by those involved in the Club as well as by the chef, so planting appropriate items will be important. If you want to be a part of this exciting effort, please call Gordon. Our own 2003 MSU Master Gardener, Gretchen Robinson, is coordinating this project. We may also be involved in gardening at the homes of those who are undergoing cancer therapy.



More Volunteer Opportunities—2004

Gateway Middle/High School—311 State Street, SE—Gateway previously received a grant from the Wege Foundation to build an “outdoor classroom.” The garden is now so overgrown that it is need of getting under control again. Dividing plants, reshaping as well as making additions is needed. Someone is needed to organize volunteers. They will be happy to work with whoever is willing to help. They will welcome anyone who will help.



Grounds/Maintenance Offer—The City of East Grand Rapids is accepting resumes for a full-time Grounds/Maintenance person to work in the Parks and Recreation Department. For more information send resume or apply in person at : EGR Human Resources, 750 Lakeside Drive, SE, East Grand Rapids, MI, 49506, or visit the website at www.eastgr.org. This, of course, will not count as volunteer hours

Baxter Community Center—935 Baxter SE
Melanie Beelen is looking for some dedicated gardeners willing to work at restoring their garden. It was designed and implemented by a MSU Master Gardener a couple of years ago but is in serious need of attention. This would be a regular maintenance kind of service. If you would like to help, or perhaps coordinate a group of workers, please let Gordon know.

Volunteers are the salt of the earth, the spice of the soup of life, the cream in the coffee, and the delight of those whom they serve!

Notices of Importance

2004 Michigan Wildflower Conference—“Woods & Water” - March 7 & 8, 2004, Kellogg Center, MSU. The keynote speaker is Rick Darke, author, lecturer, and photographer who will present a session on Sunday mornings as well as the program at the Grant Awards luncheon on Monday. For full details log-on to www.wildflowersmich.org.

2nd Annual Spring into Gardening Conference—Saturday, March 20, 2004. The conference will be held at the Kalamazoo Valley Community College, 6767 O Ave. West, Kalamazoo. Cost is \$70. Contact Emelee Reifschneider for information at 269-383-8815 or e-mail her at reifsche@msue.msu.edu. Cut-off for registration is March 8.

Used book sale at Peter M. Wege Library
How can your clean house benefit the Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park? Easy! Donate your old gardening or art-related books and magazines to the Library at the Gardens for its annual used book sale and we both benefit! The book sale will take place May 6-8 in the library during regular hours. You may bring your donations to the library any time during regular business hours. Questions? Ask Shelly Kilroy at 975-3144 skilroy@meijergardens.org or just drop into the library.
Thank you for your support.

New City Ordinance—A new ordinance is in effect, regarding trees, shrubs and plants in the parkways (the area between sidewalk and street). When not approved by the Streets and Sanitation Director of the City of GR; plants must be shorter than 36”. After the owner is cited about the non-compliance, and no action has been taken to comply; there will be fines of \$240, 1st offence, \$350 for 2nd offence, and \$500 for 3rd.

Hey there! MSU Master Gardeners!!! We are in need of people to speak at local garden clubs and other organizations. Often these are informal get-togethers and don't need a lot of preparation. Preparation and speaking time count as volunteer hours. If you will help, please call Gordon ASAP! ...and, Thanks

More Notices of Importance



The Michigan Horticultural Therapy Association (MHTA) will hold its 26th annual conference, "Horticultural Therapy: Connecting People & Plants," Friday, March 12, 2004. The MHTA conference features hands-on craft workshops, displays, refreshments, door prizes, the 12th annual Seedy Character contest, a visit to the MSU Indoor Children's Garden and lunch in the conservatory. This day is useful to Master Gardeners, garden club members, teachers, landscapers, garden writers, activity directors, and volunteers. Conference fee is \$35 for MHTA members, \$45 for non-members if postmarked by March 1. For more information, visit the website at www.mhtachapter.org or contact Cathy Leavey, at 517-655-4969 or leavey12@aol.com. We will honor this as an Advanced Master Gardener educational opportunity at full credit for hours attended. (repeat notice)

Advanced Garden Design Workshop

There is information on a Basic Garden Design workshop and an Advanced Garden Design Workshop that may be of interest to MSU Master Gardeners. The State MG Volunteer Program will be holding the workshops on March 11, 2004. Complete information is available at the following website. www.msue.msu.edu/mastergardener/Programs/2004/2004-03-Advanced-Design.htm—A registration form is also available.

We do have booklets at the Extension with details about the week-long workshops available at MSU March 5-13, 2004 at the "Agriculture and Natural Resources Week"

Hosta Society News—from Stan Roth

There will be a great hosta auction this spring on Thursday May 20, at the Allendale Township Hall off Lake Michigan Drive. They will have new plant material from Wade and Gatton Nursery and from Bob Solberg in North Carolina in addition to the plants donated by members. A couple of hosta sellers who are members of the West Michigan Hosta Society are:

- K-Gardens in Byron Center, Tim and Wilma Klamer—2938 72nd SW and,
- Ottawa Kent Nursery, Marne—Open to public sale June 26.



We have no Mystery Plant of the month or other "fascinating" puzzle, because I'm looking for one of you who might like to come up with one of these each month. How about it? I'm too busy to get as clever as this little column requires.

Mystery Plant of the Month?

Last month's winners were Karen Ann Urbanowski and Delores Stouwie who correctly identified the plant as *Actinidia kolomitka*—'Kiwi vine'. Try one, they are beautiful once established.

This is a joke!, I think!

There were two guys working for the city. One would dig a hole, the other would follow behind him and fill the hole in. They worked furiously all day without rest, one guy digging a hole, the other guy fill in it in again. An onlooker was amazed at their hard work, but couldn't understand what they were doing. So he asked the hole digger, "I appreciate the effort you are putting into your work, but what's the Story? You dig a hole and your partner follows behind and fills it up again." The hole digger wiped his brow and sighed, "Well, normally we are a three-man team, but the guy who plants the trees is sick today."

Garden Tour “Opportunities” Available



Plans for the 2004 “Stuck on Gardening” Kent/MSU Master Garden Tour are in full swing. We have identified 11 sites that will be on the Tour Saturday and Sunday, July 17th and 18th. However, there are a couple of areas where we are in need of volunteers. NOTE: All time devoted to the Garden Tour in any way are MSU volunteer credits. So, why not join us now and get started on the volunteer hours you will need for 2004. (Remember, the re-certification year is now January 1—December 31.)

Here are the opportunities available:

Serve on the Committee that plans the Tour. There are several areas open for additional volunteers including publicity, ticket sales, site volunteer assignments, and program/ticket development.

Volunteer to staff a site for a specific time period during the tour. We need to have at least three MG volunteers available to give tours on site, answer questions, sell/verify tickets, explain the Master Gardener program, etc.

As you can see, there is something for everyone to do. We will never have too many volunteers. So why not call Judy Sink today at 336-2544 and let her know which of the above “opportunities” you are interest in—or find out more about the Garden Tour. She will be happy to share.



2004 MGA Green Thumb Awards

Something new for you to ponder— well, maybe not new, but here it is anyhow.

The MGA Green Thumb Awards recognize outstanding new garden products available by mail or online. The awards are sponsored by the Mail order Gardening Association, the world’s largest nonprofit association of companies that sell garden products directly to consumers.

Winners—Plants, Bulbs & Seeds

“Li’l BIG” - Sundance Apple—Gurney’s Seed & Nursery Co. This is a new variety of super dwarf trees that grow to only six feet tall yet yield full-sized yellow apples. www.Gurneys.com

Double Oriental Lily ‘Miss Lucy’ - Van Bourgondien—’Miss Lucy’ is the first true double Oriental Lily available to gardeners. This is gorgeous!

Variegated Kiss Me Over the Garden Gate—Select Seeds—Antique Flower—*Polygonum orientale* ‘Shiro-Gane Nishiki’ features boldly variegated leaves and pale pink flowers that bloom in September from a spring sowing of seeds.

Low Ho Silver Iris—Spring Hill Nurseries—A profuse bloomer, Low Ho Silver Iris blooms in spring, summer and fall. www.SpringHillNursery.com

Cold Hardy Mediterranean Garden—High County Gardens— Terrific catalog! This lovely pre-planned garden uses an assortment of cold hardy Mediterranean perennials to create a colorful, low maintenance planting. www.highcountrygardens.com

Winners—Tools, Supplies & Accessories

Gardener’s Gold Compost Tea Kit—Gardens Alive!™ - Allows backyard gardeners an easy way to create compost tea that is loaded with beneficial microorganisms and soil/plant nutrients. www.GardensAlive.com

Encapsulated Earthworm Cocoons—Gardens Alive!™ - For the first time, earthworm cocoons (with one egg per cocoon) have been encapsulated in a patented protective coating, which puts each cocoon into a dormant state with a shelf life of two to four months when refrigerated. www.GardensAlive.com

GreenJeans™ Farm and Garden Chaps—Landscape USA—GreenJeans are chaps with a twist—they’re designed for gardeners so they have built in kneepads.

Popcorn & Movie Nite

About 20 hungry MGs showed up for our first (in awhile) "Popcorn and Movie Nite." We were treated to a Penelope Hobhouse video featuring gardens of England and the Eastern United States. We were happy to know that she was intrigued about one lady's "romantic tangle" garden. That encouraged at least me, because that's my style. We also enjoyed a few other video programs and some real yummy snacks prepared as a surprise by several folks. Please consider joining us for future events, especially if you're hungry.

Coming up soon—Evening with Mary McLellan—March 25—RSVP please!
Spring Banquet—Thursday, May 20 6:30 p.m. at Noto's.



Notes of concern

Mary Zeh just completed her second round of therapy for leukemia. She is still quite weak and does appreciate the encouraging notes and prayers of her fellow gardeners.

Sue Osgood is doing extremely well in her therapy and we wish her continued good health!

One of our MSU MGs, Donna Simpson, died on January 14th. She was involved in the Jr. Master Gardener program and at Frederik Meijer Gardens. We offer our sympathy to Donna's family and we are grateful for her and her volunteer service to our community. We will miss her.



Dahlia Society Calendar

Jo Jepsen of the Grand Valley Dahlia society has invited us to their monthly meetings. All of the meetings are open to the public. March 23 is a regular meeting at 7:30 pm in the downstairs classroom at Frederik Meijer Gardens. How to take cuttings from dahlia tubers and pot roots will be demonstrated.

April 27 at the same place will include a guest speaker on how to harvest seeds from a dahlia plant.

May 1 will be a plant and tuber sale at Heather Hills retirement center from 12 noon until about 2:00 P.M.

If you have questions call 285-4591.

Gardening for Profit Meetings

Our small group of MSU Master Gardeners who also garden for profit meet the 3rd Thursday of every month. We usually have some kind of topic relating to the business aspects of gardening. Our next meeting is at Mary Bartollatto's house at 9050 28th Street S.E. If you are coming please RSVP at 897-2547.

E-Mail Updates

We would greatly appreciate it if you would inform us of your current e-mail address. This is a convenient and expedient way to contact you with current opportunities and other news. Each time we send out an e-mail, several are returned to us. So...If you have not received a recent e-mail, like in the past month, we probably do not have your accurate address. Just give us a call or leave it on our voice mail, or better yet, e-mail us. Thanks a million!

{If you have changed your e-mail address, please include your old address.}

Kent/MSU Extension
775 Ball Avenue NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

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Future Dates:

An Evening with Mary McLellan	March 25th
Last Date to Re-Certify for 2003	March 31st
Annual MSU Master Gardener Banquet	May 20th
Chicago Trip	June 12th (tentative)
MSU Master Gardener Summer Conference	June 21st-23rd
MSU Jr. Master Gardener "Garden Tour"	July 17th & 18th
Ireland/England Trip	August 10th-20th
2004 MSU Master Gardener "Fall" Class begins	August 19th

Kent MSU Contacts—775 Ball N.E.—Grand Rapids, MI 49503

<p><u>Kent County Extension</u> <u>Website:</u> www.msue.msu.edu/kent Choose Home, Yard, & Garden under Agriculture.</p> <p><u>Master Gardener Website:</u> www.msue.msu.edu/mastergardener <u>(Both websites contain our monthly newsletters.)</u></p>	<p>Gordon Griffin Kent/MSU Master Gardener Coordinator (616) 336-3283 griffing@msue.msu.edu</p> <p>Sharon Globig Kent/MSU Lawn & Garden Hotline Coordinator (616) 336-7734 globigs@msue.msu.edu</p> <p><u>HOTLINE: 616-336-3881</u></p>	<p>Judy Sink Kent/MSU Jr. Master Gardener Coordinator (616) 336-2544 sinkj@msue.msu.edu</p> <p>[If you want to belong to our growing number of MGs receiving the newsletter via e-mail, just contact Gordon.]</p>
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